

ADDRESS

TO THE

P E O P L E

OF

W E S T V I R G I N I A ;

SHEWING THAT

SLAVERY IS INJURIOUS TO THE PUBLIC WELFARE, AND
THAT IT MAY BE GRADUALLY ABOLISHED, WITH-
OUT DETRIMENT TO THE RIGHTS AND IN-
TERESTS OF SLAVEHOLDERS.

BY A SLAVEHOLDER OF WEST VIRGINIA.

LEXINGTON:

PRINTED BY R. C. NOEL.

1847.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LEXINGTON, VA., SEPT. 1st, 1847.

Dear Sir :

The undersigned believing that the argument recently delivered by you in the Franklin Society, in favor of the removal of the negro population from Western Virginia, was not only able but unanswerable; and that its publication will tend to bring the public mind to a correct conclusion on that momentous question; request that you will furnish us with a full statement of that argument for the press.

We cannot expect that you will now be able to furnish us with the speech precisely as it was delivered, nor is it our wish that you shall confine yourself strictly to the views then expressed. Our desire is to have the whole argument in favor of the proposition, presented to the public, in a perspicuous and condensed form. And believing that your views were not only forcible but conclusive, and that they were presented in a shape, which cannot give just cause of offence to even those who are most fastidious and excitable on all subjects having any connexion with the subject of slavery, we trust that you will be disposed cheerfully to comply with our request above expressed.

Very Respectfully,

Your ob't serv'ts,

S. McD. MOORE,
JOHN LETCHER,
DAVID P. CURRY,
JAMES G. HAMILTON,
GEORGE A. BAKER,
J. H. LACY,
JOHN ECHOLS,
JAMES R. JORDAN,
JACOB FULLER, Jr.,
D. E. MOORE,
JOHN W. FULLER.

The Rev. HENRY RUFFNER, D. D.

LEXINGTON, VA., September 4th, 1847.

To Messrs. Moore, Letcher, &c.,

GENTLEMEN :

Though long opposed in feeling to the perpetuation of slavery, yet like others I felt no call to immediate action to promote its removal,

until the close of the important debate in the Franklin Society, to which your letter alludes. The arguments delivered by several of yourselves, and the results of my own examination of facts, so impressed my mind with the importance of the subject to the welfare of the country, that I proceeded immediately to write out an argument in favor of a gradual removal of slavery from my native soil, our dear West Virginia; and intended in some way to present it to the consideration of my fellow-citizens. Some months ago you privately signified a desire that it might be printed, and have now formally made the request.

I cheerfully comply, so far as this, in the first instance, that I will prepare for the press an Address to the Citizens of West Virginia, comprising the substance of the argument as delivered by me, enriched and strengthened by some of the impressive views exhibited by several of yourselves. Within the limits of a moderately sized pamphlet, it is impossible to introduce every important consideration bearing on the subject, or to do more than present the substance of the prominent facts and reasons which were more fully exhibited and illustrated by the debaters in the Society.

As we are nearly all slaveholders, and none of us approve of the principles and measures of the sect of abolitionists, we think that no man can be offended with us for offering to the people an argument, whose sole object is to show that the prosperity of our West Virginia—if not of East Virginia also,—would be promoted by removing gradually the institution of slavery, in a manner consistent with the rights and interests of slaveholders.

To the Great Being who rules the destinies of our country, I commit the issue of this important movement.

Yours,

HENRY RUFFNER.

ADDRESS

TO THE

CITIZENS OF WEST VIRGINIA.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

Now is the time, when we of West Virginia should review our public affairs, and consider what measures are necessary and expedient to promote the welfare of ourselves and our posterity. Three years hence another census of the United States will have been completed. Then it will appear how large a majority we are of the citizens of this commonwealth, and how unjust it is that our fellow citizens of East Virginia, being a minority of the people, should be able, by means of their majority in the Legislature, to govern both East and West for their own advantage. You have striven in vain to get this inequality of representation rectified. The same legislative majority has used the power of which we complain, to make all our complaints fruitless, and to retain the ascendancy now when they represent a minority of the people, which they secured to themselves eighteen years ago, while they yet represented the majority.

You have submitted patiently, heretofore, to the refusal of the East to let West Virginia grow in political power as she has grown in population and wealth. Though you will not cease to urge your claims, you will, if necessary, still exercise this patient forbearance, until the next census shall furnish you with an argument, which cannot be resisted with any show of reason. Then—as it seems to be understood among us—you will make a final and decisive effort to obtain your just weight in the government.

That will be a critical period in your public affairs. A great end will then be gained, or a great failure will be experienced. Are you sure of success? Can you be sure of it, while the question of representation stands alone, and liable to unpropitious influences, even on our side of the Blue Ridge? We propose to strengthen this cause, by connecting with it another of equally momentous consequence—in some respects even more—to our public welfare. United they will stand; divided they may fall.

You claim the white basis of representation, on the republican

principle that *the majority shall rule*. You deny that slaves, who constitute no part of the political body, shall add political weight to their masters, either as individual voters or as a mass of citizens. But the slaveholding interest, which is supreme in the East, is also powerful in some parts of the West. Let this be considered as a *perpetual* and a *growing* interest in our part of the State, and it may throw so much weight on the side of the Eastern principle of representation, when the hour of decision comes, as to produce a compromise, and to secure to the East a part at least of what she claims on the ground of her vast slave property. But let all the West, on due consideration, conclude that slavery is a pernicious institution, and must be gradually removed; then, united in our views on all the great interests of our West Virginia, we shall meet the approaching crisis with inflexible resolution; and West Virginia can and must succeed in her approaching struggle for her rights and her prosperity.

The more you consider the subject, the more you will be convinced that both these questions—the white basis and slavery—are of vital importance, and so intimately connected, that to insure success in either, we must unite them in our discussions both among ourselves and with East Virginia. On both should our views and our policy be firmly settled, when the crisis of 1850 shall arrive.

It is not the object of this address to discuss the question of representation. We leave that subject to the abler management of those who have heretofore conducted the discussion. Yet as the success of the great measure which we shall advocate in this address, will depend much upon our obtaining a just share of representation in the Legislature, we call your attention to some facts, for the purpose of showing, that West Virginia has heretofore suffered incalculably from her weakness in the Legislature. We remind you of these things, not to excite resentful feelings, but to confirm you in your purpose to adhere inflexibly to your just claim of representation on the white basis, *without compromise*. We shall refer to two facts only, out of many that might be mentioned.

Fifty years ago, when the country beyond the Ohio began to be opened for settlement, Virginia had already been for years in full and undisputed possession of her extensive territory on this side. The country between the Alleghany and the Ohio, containing eighteen millions of acres, much of it excellent soil, and abounding in mineral wealth, was an almost unbroken wilderness, and almost inaccessible to emigrants, for want of roads through the mountains. The feeble and detached settlements applied, and for thirty years continued to apply, *almost in vain*, for legislative aid to open wagon roads from the Eastern settlements into their valleys. Let the Acts of Assembly for these thirty years of our infancy in West Virginia, be examined, and they will show how little, how *very little*, our Eastern mother was willing to do to promote the growth of her nurseling in the mountains. A few thousand dollars out of her rich treasury—very few indeed—and now and then some arrearages of taxes due from the poor settlers in the wilderness, was all that the

government could be prevailed on to advance, for the purpose of opening this extensive territory for settlement, and to accommodate its secluded inhabitants.

Now can any man doubt, that if the Legislature had, in the prosperous days of East Virginia, from 1794 to 1824, appropriated only ten or twelve thousand dollars a year to make good wagon roads through the mountain districts, that West Virginia would have increased in population and wealth far more than she did, or could do without roads? May we not affirm, that if East Virginia had pursued that just and enlightened policy, West Virginia would 20 years ago have been more populous than she was by 100,000 souls, and more wealthy in a still greater proportion? No man who has seen the effect of some lately-constructed roads, in promoting population and wealth, can doubt it. And what shows more conclusively the blindness or illiberality of this Eastern policy towards the West, is, that the public treasury would have been remunerated, fourfold at least, by the additional revenue which this early outlay for roads—had it been made—would have produced from the taxpayers of West Virginia. Here we have one notable instance of what West Virginia has suffered from her dependence on an Eastern Legislature. Though her growth in spite of Eastern neglect, has enabled her of late years to get some valuable improvements made, she is still dependent for every boon of this kind, upon the will of those Eastern people who are now a minority of the Commonwealth.

The other instance to which we intended to refer, is of still greater importance than the former. Many of you remember that in 1832, when a negro insurrection in Southampton county had filled nearly all Virginia with alarm, and made every white man think of the evils of slavery, a resolution was introduced into the Legislature, to adopt a system of gradual emancipation, by which the State might, in the course of 50 years, get rid of the evils of slavery.

Whatever may be thought of such a measure in reference to East Virginia, where the slaves are more numerous than the whites; there can be no rational doubt that in West Virginia, the measure, had it been carried 15 years ago, would by this time have wrought a most happy change in the condition and prospects of the country: and so the people of West Virginia then thought, for they were generally and warmly in favor of it, and zealously advocated it through their able and patriotic Delegates. But in spite of their efforts, it was rejected by the all powerful Eastern majority, though several Eastern Delegates joined the West in its support.

We do not censure our Eastern brethren for opposing this measure so far as their part of the State is concerned. But still, we of West Virginia must deem ourselves not only unfortunate, but aggrieved, when an Eastern majority in the Legislature debars us from obtaining measures conducive to our welfare, because these same measures may not suit the policy of East Virginia.

Though defeated for the time, the friends of gradual emancipation

were not in despair. There was a general acknowledgment of the evils of slavery ; and strong hopes were entertained that, in a few years, a decided majority of the Legislature would be for ridding the country of this deleterious institution. But these hopes were sadly disappointed. East Virginia became more and more adverse, not only to emancipation in any mode or form, but to any discussion of the subject. Even in our West Virginia, though we believe no material change of sentiment has taken place, little has since been said, and nothing done, to effect an object so important to the welfare of the country.

This long silence and apparent apathy on our part, is also in some degree owing to our conscious inability to do any thing requiring Legislative action, unless East Virginia be pleased to aid us, and this we have felt certain she would not do, at any time since the debate of 1832.

But this unfavorable change of sentiment in Virginia, is due chiefly to the fanatical violence of those Northern anti-slavery men, who have been usually called ABOLITIONISTS.

The excitement in Great Britain on the subject of West Indian slavery, was caught by some enthusiasts in this country, and from that day to this some thousands of these people have been smitten with a sort of moral insanity. A malignant rage against slave-holders—denoted by bitter denunciations and unprincipled calumnies—has characterized their proceedings. Many other anti-slavery men, led on by indiscreet zeal, but actuated by purer motives, contributed to swell the torrent of denunciation, and to alarm the Southern people by incessant attempts to disturb their domestic relations, and to drive them into an immediate abolition of slavery. Southern men of all parties were indignant at this unjustifiable interference with their domestic concerns : they knew also that as the principles of the abolitionists were erroneous, so the measures which they insisted on our adopting, were rash and dangerous.

The friends of gradual emancipation soon saw that of all the ill winds that would blow upon their cause, this storm of abolitionism was the worst. They had to postpone all efforts to effect their object, until this tempest of fanaticism should spend its violence, or become less alarming. It has raged during 15 years : and now the abolitionists may boast, if they will, that they have done more in this time to rivet the chains of the slave, and to fasten the curse of slavery upon the country, than all the pro-slavery men in the world have done, or could do, in half a century. They have not, by honorable means, liberated a single slave : and they never will, by such a course of procedure as they have pursued. On the contrary, they have created new difficulties in the way of all judicious schemes of emancipation, by prejudicing the minds of slave-holders, and by compelling us to combat their false principles and rash schemes, in our rear ; whilst we are facing the opposition of men, and the natural difficulties of the case, in our front.

But, fellow-citizens, shall we suffer this meddlesome sect of abolitionists to blind our eyes to the evils of slavery, and to tie up our hands, when the condition of the country and the welfare of ourselves and our children, summon us to immediate action? We all agree that the abolitionists shall not interfere with any policy that we may choose to adopt, in reference to our domestic relations. We repudiate all connection with themselves, their principles and their measures. All that we ask of them, is that they stand aloof, and let us and our slaves alone. One thing we feel certain of, that we can and do provide better for the welfare of our slaves, than they ever did or ever will. What have they ever done, to better the condition of the slaves whom they have enticed away from their masters? We venture to affirm, that the majority of the poor fellows who have thus been lured away, have regretted the ease and plenty which they left behind them. We are not sure that those even, who have been paraded, as abolition lions, from city to city, to tell horrible stories—the more horrible the better—about the cruelty of slaveholders—have long enjoyed as much comfort in their lying occupation, as many a contented inmate of our Southern negro-quarters has enjoyed in his slavery.

But what of all these abolition manœuvres? They are of such a character, that they disgrace the party which employs them, and disable that party to do as much mischief as they otherwise could.

Having failed in their first mode of action, by denunciatory pamphlets and newspapers and by petitions to Congress, the most violent class of abolitionists have now formed themselves into a political party, aiming to subvert the Federal Constitution, which guaranties the rights of slaveholders, and to destroy the Federal Union, which is the glory and safeguard of us all. Thus they have armed against themselves every American patriot: and what is most remarkable, they have met, from the opposite extreme, those Southern politicians and ultra-proslavery men—called chivalry and nullifiers—who so often predict and threaten a dissolution of the Union. Thus it is that extremes often meet.

Now when the ultraists on both sides have shown their colors, we may leave them to the management of the uncorrupted classes of American citizens, *who will doubtless give a good account of them all*—whilst we of West Virginia steer our course in the safe middle way, and seek to remove the plague of slavery from our limits, without incurring the charge of ultra-abolitionism on the one hand, or of ultra *proslaveryism*—or whatever it may be called—on the other. Against the one party we affirm the right of slaveholding, under present circumstances; against the other party, we affirm the expediency of removing slavery from West Virginia, and from every other State or portion of a State, in which the number of slaves is not too large.

At the same time we avow the principle, that every State, and every great division of a State, ought, in a domestic matter of such

importance to judge and act for itself. We disclaim all intention to interfere with slavery in East Virginia. We leave it to our brethren there, to choose for themselves, whether they will let the institution remain as it is, or whether they will modify it or abolish it, in one way or in another. Their slave population is relatively eight times as large as ours. The same remedy may not be expedient in such different stages of a disease. All that we ask of our Eastern brethren, in regard to this matter, is, that if West Virginia shall call for a law to remove slavery from her side of the Blue Ridge, East Virginia shall not refuse her consent, because the measure may not be palatable to herself.

Heretofore no such scheme for West Virginia only has been proposed among us; and no State has abolished slavery in one part of her territory and retained it in another. For this reason some persons may at first thought consider such a scheme as unfeasible. A State composed partly of free, and partially of slaveholding territory, may seem to present a political incongruity, and to be incapable of conducting its public affairs harmoniously. To relieve the minds of those who may feel apprehensions of this sort, we offer the following suggestions.

1. Free States and slaveholding States have, during 58 years, lived peaceably and prosperously under one Federal government. Sectional jealousies and occasional jars have occurred, but without evil consequence.

2. Nothing in the nature of the case need create difficulty, except the framing of laws that may affect the rights and interests of slaveholders. But an amendment of the constitution could easily provide for the security of slaveholders in East Virginia against all unjust legislation, arising from the power or the anti-slavery principles of the West.

3. After such an emancipation law as we propose, should be passed for West Virginia, no immediate change would take place in the institution of slavery among us; except that masters would probably choose to emancipate or remove from the State, a larger number of slaves than heretofore. As only the next generation of negroes would be entitled to emancipation, the law would not begin its practical operation for 21 years at least, and then it would operate gradually for 30 or 40 years longer, before slavery would be extinguished in West Virginia. So that for many years the actual slave interest among us would not be greatly diminished.

4. There is, and long has been, in different parts of Virginia, every degree of difference, from the least to the greatest, between the slaveholding and non-slaveholding interests of the people. In some parts, the slaves are two or three times as numerous as the whites, and the slaveholding interest overrules and absorbs every thing. In other parts, not one man in a hundred owns a slave, and the slaveholding interest is virtually nothing. In West Virginia at large, the slaves being only one-eighth of the population, and the slaveholding

population less than one-eighth of the whites, the free interest predominates nearly as much as the slave interest predominates in East Virginia : so that we have in practical operation, if not in perfection, that political incongruity of slave interest and free interest, which is feared as a consequence of the measure that we propose.

5. By allowing West Virginia her just share of representation, and, if she call for it, a law for the removal of slavery, East Virginia will do more to harmonize the feelings of the State, than she ever has done, or can do by a continued refusal. West Virginia being then secured in her essential rights and interests, will not desire a separation, nor be disposed to disturb the harmony of the Commonwealth. So far from aiding the designs of the abolitionists, either in Congress or in our Legislature, both her feelings and her interests will make her more than ever hostile to that pernicious sect.

6. If East Virginia apprehend, that the delegates from the free counties would often speak more freely about slavery matters, than she would like to hear in her central city of Richmond ; let her agree to remove the seat of government to Staunton, near the centre of our territory and of our white population, and she will be free from all annoyance of this sort. West Virginia would then appear no more like a remote province of East Virginia, and be no longer subject to the disadvantage of having all measures affecting her interest, acted upon by a Legislature deliberating in the heart of East Virginia, and exposed to the powerful influence of a city and a people, whose bland manners and engaging hospitalities, are enough to turn both the hearts and the heads of us rough mountaineers, whether we be legislators or not.

Having thus removed some grounds of misapprehension and prejudice respecting our views, we shall now proceed, fellow-citizens, to lay before you some facts and arguments, which prove the expediency of abolishing slavery in West Virginia, by a gradual process, that shall not cause any inconvenience either to society in general, or to slaveholders in particular.

We use no theoretical or abstract arguments. We ground our conclusions upon facts and experience. Though the history of other ages and countries would furnish us with useful illustrations, we have not room in this address to extend our observations much beyond our own age and country. Nor is it necessary that we should ; for within these limits we have abundant materials for argument,—far more than we shall be able to use on the present occasion.

No where, since time began, have the two systems of slave labor and free labor, been subjected to so fair and so decisive a trial of their effects on public prosperity, as in these United States. Here the two systems have worked side by side for ages, under such equal circumstances both political and physical, and with such ample time and opportunity for each to work out its proper effects,—that all must admit the experiment to be now complete, and the result decisive. No man of common sense, who has observed this result, can doubt

for a moment, that the system of free labor promotes the growth and prosperity of States, in a much higher degree than the system of slave labor. In the first settlement of a country, when labor is scarce and dear, slavery may give a temporary impulse to improvement : but even this is not the case, except in warm climates, and where free men are scarce and either sickly or lazy : and when we have said this, we have said all that experience in the United States warrants us to say, in favor of the policy of employing slave labor.

It is the common remark of all who have travelled through the United States, that the free States and the slave States, exhibit a striking contrast in their appearance. In the older free States are seen all the tokens of prosperity :—a dense and increasing population ;—thriving villages, towns and cities ;—a neat and productive agriculture, growing manufactures and active commerce.

In the older parts of the slave States,—with a few local exceptions,—are seen, on the contrary, too evident signs of stagnation or of positive decay,—a sparse population,—a slovenly cultivation spread over vast fields, that are wearing out, among others already worn out and desolate ;—villages and towns, “ few and far between,” rarely growing, often decaying, sometimes mere remnants of what they were, sometimes deserted ruins, haunted only by owls ;—generally no manufactures, nor even trades, except the indispensable few ;—commerce and navigation abandoned, as far as possible, to the people of the free States ;—and generally, instead of the stir and bustle of industry, a dull and dreamy stillness, broken, if broken at all, only by the wordy brawl of politics.

But we depend not on general statements of this sort, however unquestionable their truth may be. We shall present you with statistical facts, drawn from public documents of the highest authority. We shall compare slave States with free States, in general and in particular, and in so many points of view, that you cannot mistake in forming your judgment of their comparative prosperity.

Density and increase of population are, especially in the United States, both an element and a criterion of prosperity. The men of a State are its first element of power—not only military power, and political power—but what is of more importance, *productive* power. The labor of men produces wealth, and with it the means of all human comfort and improvement. The more men there are on a square mile, the more power there is on that square mile, to create every thing that conduces to the welfare of man. We know that the natural resources of every country are limited ; and that whenever there are men enough in a country, to improve all its resources of wealth to the best advantage, increase of population becomes an evil. But no State in this Union has yet approached that point ; no slave State has advanced half way to it. England still prospers with more than 250 inhabitants to the square mile ; Virginia languishes with only 20, though she is by nature almost as richly endowed as England. Massachusetts thrives with 100 inhabitants to the square mile ;

Virginia, considering her natural advantages, ought to thrive as well with a much larger number ; and so she would, if she had the same quality of men on her soil.

Without further preface, we proceed to compare

1. *The progress of population in the free States and the slaveholding States.*

It has so happened that, from the beginning, these two classes of States have been nearly equal in number and in natural advantages ; only the slaveholding States have always had the larger share of territory, with a soil and climate peculiarly adapted to the richest products of Agriculture.

At the first census in the year 1790, these two classes of States were about equal in population : the free States had 1,968,000 inhabitants, and the slave States 1,961,000 ; so that they started even in the race of population ; for the superior extent of the slave States gave them an advantage in the race, far more than equivalent to their small inferiority of numbers.

Twenty years later, it was found that the free States had gained 276,000 inhabitants more than the slave States ; though Louisiana with her population, had in the mean time been added to the latter.

The free States continued to run ahead, gaining more and more on the slave States at each successive census, up to the last in 1840, when they had a population of 9,729,000, against 7,320,000 in the slave States.

This result is more surprising, when we consider that in 1790, the slave States had a territory embracing 220,000 square miles, against 160,000 square miles in the free States ; and that as new States and Territories were added to the old, the class of slave States still gained in Territory, as they continued to fall behind in population. In 1840, the slaveholding Territory, actually inhabited, contained an area of 580,000 square miles, at least ; while the inhabited free Territory, contained about 360,000 square miles. The slave country was therefore less than half as thickly peopled as the free country.

Some advocates of slavery apologize for this result, by ascribing it to foreign emigration, which, they say, goes almost wholly to the free States. We deny that it goes *almost wholly* to the free States : but if it did ; what are we to infer from the fact ? That slavery does not check the growth of States ? No ; but on the contrary, that it checks their growth in various ways ; partly by repelling emigrants, who would come from the free States and from foreign countries—which it does : and partly by driving out free laborers from the slave States into the free States—which it does, also.

But this general comparison between the two classes of States, does not truly measure the effect of slavery in checking the growth and prosperity of States ; because, in the first place, it takes in the new thinly peopled slave States, where slave labor operating on new soils of the best quality, has not had time to do its work of impoverishment and desolation ; and because, in the second place, it takes in some States, both old and new, in which the slaves are com-

paratively few, and a predominance of free labor counteracts the destructive tendencies of slavery. Such are the old State of Maryland and the new State of Missouri; besides others—as Kentucky and Tennessee—in which slavery, though deeply injurious, is itself held in check by a free laboring population.

We will therefore take the old free States, and compare them with the old slave States of Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia, in which slave labor predominates.

New England and the middle States of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, contained in 1790, 1,968,000 inhabitants, and in 1840, 6,760,000; having gained, in this period, 243 per cent.

The four old slave States had in 1790, a population of 1,473,000; and in 1840, of 3,279,000, having gained, in the same period, 122 per cent, just about half as much in proportion, as the free States. They ought to have gained about twice as much; for they had at first only seven inhabitants to the square mile, when the free States not only had upwards of twelve, but on the whole much inferior advantages of soil and climate. Even cold, barren New England, though more than twice as thickly peopled, grew in population at a faster rate than these old slave States.

About half the territory of these old slave States is new country, and has comparatively few slaves. On this part the increase of population has chiefly taken place. On the old slave-labored lowlands, a singular phenomenon has appeared: there, within the bounds of these rapidly growing United States,—yes, there, population has been long at a stand; yes, over wide regions—especially in Virginia—it has declined, and a new wilderness is gaining upon the cultivated land! What has done this work of desolation? Not war, nor pestilence; not oppression of rulers, civil or ecclesiastical;—but *slavery*, a curse more destructive in its effects than any of them. It were hard to find, in old king-ridden, priest-ridden, overtaxed, Europe, so large a country, where within twenty years past, such a growing poverty and desolation have appeared.

It is in the last period of ten years, from 1830 to 1840, that this consuming plague of slavery has shown its worst effects in the old Southern States. Including the increase in their newly settled, and Western counties, they gained in population only $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; while cold, barren, thickly peopled, New England gained 15, and the old middle States, 26 per cent. East Virginia actually fell off 26,000 in population; and with the exception of Richmond and one or two other towns, her population continues to decline. Old Virginia was the first to sow this land of ours with slavery; she is also the first to reap the full harvest of destruction. Her lowland neighbors of Maryland and the Carolinas, were not far behind at the *seeding*; nor are they far behind at the ingathering of desolation. Most sorry are we for this fallen condition of “The Old Dominion,” and of her neighbors: but such being the fact, we state it, as an argument and a warning to our West Virginia. It demonstrates the ruinous effects of slavery upon the countries in which the longest and most complete trial of it has been made.

There are certain drugs, of which large doses are poisonous, but small ones are innocent or even salutary. Slavery is not of this kind. Large doses of it kill, it is true; but smaller doses, mix them as you will, are sure to sicken and debilitate the body politic. This can be abundantly proved by examples. For one, let us take the rich and beautiful State of Kentucky, compared with her free neighbor Ohio. The slaves of Kentucky have composed less than a fourth part of her population. But mark their effect upon the comparative growth of the State. In the year 1800, Kentucky contained 221,000 inhabitants, and Ohio, 45,000. In forty years, the population of Kentucky had risen to 780,000; that of Ohio to 1,519,000. This wonderful difference could not be owing to any natural superiority of the Ohio country. Kentucky is nearly as large, nearly as fertile, and quite equal in other gifts of nature. She had greatly the advantage too in the outset of this forty years race of population. She started with $5\frac{1}{2}$ inhabitants to the square mile, and came out with 20: Ohio started with one inhabitant to the square mile, and came out with 38. Kentucky had full possession of her territory at the beginning. Much of Ohio was then, and for a long time afterwards, in possession of the Indians. Ohio is by this time considerably more than twice as thickly peopled as Kentucky; yet she still gains both by natural increase and by the influx of emigrants; while Kentucky has for twenty years been receiving much fewer emigrants than Ohio, and multitudes of her citizens have been yearly moving off to newer and yet newer countries.

In Tennessee the proportion of slaves is about the same, and the effects are about the same, as in Kentucky. Missouri is too new a country to afford instruction on this subject; but her physical advantages are drawing such a multitude of free emigrants into her, that her small amount of slavery must, ere long, give way and vanish before "the genius of universal emancipation."

Maryland has comparatively few slaves, and these are found chiefly about her old tide water shores, where like the locusts, they have eaten up nearly every green thing. On the whole, the slaves of Maryland have composed between a fourth and a fifth part of her population. Her progress under this dead weight, has been much slower than that of her neighbor Pennsylvania; and would be completely stopped, if this free neighbor did not send a vivifying influence into her upper counties and her city of Baltimore.

Our own West Virginia furnishes conclusive evidence, that slavery, in all quantities and degrees, has a pernicious influence on the public welfare. But we reserve this example to a subsequent head of the argument, where we can present it in a more complete form.

We have now seen how slavery, when in full operation, first checks, and then stops, the growth of population; and finally turns it into a decline. We have seen also that slavery, when in partial operation, or mixed with a larger proportion of free labor, hangs like a dead weight upon a country, and makes it drag heavily onwards in the march of population.

Increase of population depends upon increase in the means of

living. Whenever the three great branches of productive industry, Agriculture, Manufactures and Commerce, or any of them, continue to yield increasing products, the population will increase at the same rate; because then industry produces a surplus beyond the present wants of the people, and more families can be supported. This is the general rule. The only exceptions to it are partial and temporary in their occurrence. Population may increase to a small degree, while the yearly products of industry are stationary; but then it can be, only by allowing to each individual a reduced share of products. In this case poverty and misery increase with the population, and must soon stop its progress. In this country, where emigration to new territories is so easy, the people are sure to relieve themselves by emigration, whenever the means of living begin to fail in their native place. Without some pressure of this sort, attachment to their native land is ordinarily sufficient to prevent men from emigrating. Some may emigrate without any feeling of necessity; but as many, if not more, will not emigrate, until want pinches them sorely.

We may lay it down as a general rule, therefore, that the quantity of emigration from a State is a pretty accurate index of its comparative prosperity. If few leave it, we may justly infer that its industry is thriving—sufficiently so to support the natural increase of its population, and to make nearly all contented at home. But if a large and perpetual stream of emigrants is pouring out of it in search of better fortune elsewhere;—it is an infallible symptom of one of two things; either that the country has no more natural sources from which industry may draw increasing products,—or that the people are deficient in enterprise and skill to improve the resources of their country.

Let us apply this rule to Virginia, and how will she appear? We take it for granted, that the people of Virginia multiply as fast, naturally, as the people of other States—that is, at the rate of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent in ten years; so that if none emigrated, the number would be increased by one third in that period of time.

Compare this natural increase with the census returns, and it appears that in the ten years from 1830 to 1840, Virginia lost by emigration no fewer than 375,000 of her people, of whom East Virginia lost 304,000 and West Virginia 71,000. At this rate Virginia supplies the West every ten years with a population equal in number to the population of the State of Mississippi in 1840!

Some Virginia politicians proudly—yes, *proudly*,—fellow-citizens,—call our old Commonwealth, *The Mother of States!* These *enlightened* patriots might pay her a still higher compliment, by calling her *The Grandmother of States*. For our part, we are grieved and mortified, to think of the lean and haggard condition of our venerable mother. Her black children have sucked her so dry, that now, for a long time past, she has not milk enough for her offspring, either black or white.

But, seriously, fellow-citizens, we esteem it a sad, a humiliating, fact, which should penetrate the heart of every Virginian, that from

the year 1790 to this time, Virginia has lost more people by emigration, than all the old free States together. Up to 1840, when the last census was taken, she had lost more by nearly 300,000. She has sent—or we should rather say, she has driven from her soil—at least one third of all the emigrants, who have gone from the old States to the new. More than another third have gone from the other old slave States. Many of these multitudes, who have left the slave States, have shunned the regions of slavery, and settled in the free countries of the West. These were generally industrious and enterprising white men, who found by sad experience, that a country of slaves was not the country for them. It is a truth, a certain truth, that *slavery drives free laborers—farmers, mechanics, and all, and some of the best of them too—out of the country, and fills their places with negroes.*

What is it but slavery that makes Marylanders, Carolinians, and especially old Virginians and new Virginians—fly their country at such a rate? Some go because they dislike slavery and desire to get away from it: others, because they have gloomy forebodings of what is to befall the slave States, and wish to leave their families in a country of happier prospects: others, because they cannot get profitable employment among slaveholders: others, industrious and high-spirited working men, will not stay in a country where slavery degrades the working man: others go because they see that their country, for some reason, does not prosper, and that other countries, not far off, are prospering, and will afford better hopes of prosperity to themselves: others, a numerous class, who are slaveholders and cannot live without slaves, finding that they cannot live longer with them on their worn out soils, go to seek better lands and more profitable crops, where slave labor may yet for a while enable them and their children to live.

But you know well, fellow-citizens, that this perpetual drain of our population, does not arise from a failure of natural resources for living in Virginia. How could it, while so much good soil is yet a wilderness, and so much old soil could be fertilized; and while such resources for manufactures and commerce lie neglected?

Had Virginia retained her natural increase, or received as many emigrants as she sent away, from the year 1790 to the present time, she would now have had three times her actual population; and, had all been free-men, each laboring voluntarily, and for his own benefit, all could have prospered in her wide and richly-gifted territory.

The true cause of this unexampled emigration is, that no branch of industry flourishes, or can flourish among us, so long as slavery is established by law, and the labor of the country is done chiefly by men, who can gain nothing by assiduity, by skill, or by economy. All the older slaveholding States have proved this by sad experience. We shall make good the assertion by setting before you,

2. *A comparative view of the Agriculture, the Manufactures*

and the Commerce, of the old free States, and the old slave States,—especially Virginia.

Thus we shall lay open the immediate causes of the vast emigration from our State, and of the slow growth of West Virginia and Kentucky, in comparison with the neighboring free countries.

You will observe also, how every class of facts that bear at all upon the subject, lead uniformly to the same conclusion; how every line of inquiry always points to slavery, as the original cause of inferior prosperity or of positive decline.

In our statements we always go upon the best evidence which can be had,—generally official documents.

We begin with

The Agriculture of the old States.

The census of 1840 embraces returns of the number of live stock in each State;—the estimated quantities of grain and other crops raised the preceding year;—the value of poultry, of the products of dairies, orchards and market gardens;—the quantities of firewood, lumber, tar, &c., sold in each State;—together with the number of persons employed in agriculture.

The plan was to obtain a complete view of the agriculture of the United States. Many errors undoubtedly exist in these returns, partly from wrong estimates of the farmers, partly from the negligence of the Deputy Marshals who took the census. Some blunders of the latter are manifest upon the face of the returns; but these may sometimes be corrected, if not perfectly, yet sufficiently for all useful purposes.

Be it observed, that what we want to know on the present occasion, is not the quantity to a bushel, nor the value to a dollar, of the agricultural products of each State; but such a comparative view of what the lands of the several States produce, in quantity and in value, that we may form a substantially correct judgment of the relative productiveness of their agricultural industry. This we can do beyond a reasonable doubt, by a judicious use of the census. Persons acquainted with this sort of investigations know, that although each farmer in reporting his crops might commit some error, yet when all the reports came to be summed up, the errors would tend to balance one another; and that, as the same sorts of errors would probably be committed in all the States, the returns might, on the whole, be comparatively right, though each one was positively wrong. Thus, if the returns for Virginia should be one-fourth below the truth, and those for New York one-fourth below the truth; each would be erroneous in itself, yet the two would truly represent the comparative products of agriculture in these States: and this is all that we want in the present argument. But again, suppose that the errors did not tally so exactly;—for example, that the returns for Virginia were one-fourth below the truth, but for New York only one-fifth be-

low the truth ; yet if it appeared by the returns, that the agriculture of Virginia was only half as profitable as that of New York ; though the result would not show accurately *how much* less profitable our agriculture was, than that of New York ; yet it would truly show the fact, that it was *much* less profitable ;—and this degree of truth is sufficient for our argument.

Now if any man deny that this sufficient degree of truth can be deduced from the census ; he is bound to sustain his denial, by convicting the census of a greater amount of error than we have made allowance for ;—and that too, *in the very same returns that we use in our calculations*. But no man alive can do this ; for these returns are incomparably *the best evidence that exists on the subject*, and are substantially confirmed by the agricultural census of New York—(since made)—so far as that State is concerned ; and in fact, generally confirmed by all sorts of evidence, so far as any exists.

In the returns of hemp and flax raised in Virginia, there is an evident blunder of the Deputy Marshals in the counties of Bedford, Prince William, Lee and Lewis : where *hundred weights* reported, seem to have been set down as *tons*. With this exception, no great error appears. We have made the correction in our calculations ; but enormous as the error seems to be, it might stand without materially varying the comparative results.

By estimating the value of the yearly products of each State, and dividing the same by the number of persons employed in making those products, we find the average value produced by each person : and by comparing the results of the calculation for the several States, we discover the comparative productiveness of Agricultural labor in the States. This is what we want for our argument.

Professor Tucker, late of the University of Virginia, in his useful book, on *The Progress of Population, &c.*, has given in detail a calculation of this sort. He was certainly not partial to the North in his estimates. We have carefully examined them ; and think that his valuations of products are in some particulars erroneous. We think, also, that he has omitted some elements necessary to an accurate result. We have therefore in our own calculations arrived at results somewhat different from his ; yet so far as our argument is concerned, the difference is immaterial. We can therefore assure you, fellow-citizens, that no sort of calculation, founded on any thing like truth or reason, can bring out a result materially different from ours.

We have not room here for the particulars that enter into the calculations : we can only give the results themselves.

The general results, according to both Mr. Tucker and ourselves, are as follows :

In New England, agricultural industry yields an annual value, averaging about one hundred and eighty dollars to the hand, that is, for each person employed.

In the middle States of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania,

the average is about two hundred and sixty-five or two hundred and seventy-dollars to the hand.

And in the old slave States, South of the Potomac, the average is about 130 dollars to the hand. This, according to our calculation, is rather above the average for East Virginia, but below that for West Virginia. The average for all Virginia is about 138 dollars.

Thus it appears by the best evidence which the case admits of, that the farmers of the middle States, with their free labor, produce more than twice as great a value to the hand, as the farmers and planters of the old slave States; and that even the New Englanders, on their poor soils and under their wintry sky, make nearly forty per cent more, to the hand, than the old Southerners make in the "sunny South," with the advantage of their valuable staples, cotton and tobacco.

In Maryland, the result is intermediate between the average of the North and that of the South; and this agrees strikingly with her condition as a half-slave State; for lower Maryland is cultivated by negroes, and has a languishing agriculture, as well as a stationary population: but upper Maryland is cultivated by free labor, and has a thriving agriculture with a growing population.

These results, founded on the best evidence, and confirmed by general observation, are for substance undubitably correct, and cannot be overthrown.

Now it is admitted on all hands, that slave labor is better adapted to agriculture, than to any other branch of industry; and that, if not good for agriculture, it is really good for nothing.

Therefore, since in agriculture, slave labor is proved to be far less productive than free labor,—*slavery is demonstrated to be not only unprofitable, but deeply injurious to the public prosperity.*

We do not mean that slave labor can never earn any thing for him that employs it. The question is between free labor and slave labor. He that chooses to employ a sort of labor, that yields only half as much to the hand as another sort would yield, makes a choice that is not only unprofitable, but deeply injurious to his interest.

Agriculture in the slave States may be characterized in general by two epithets—*extensive—exhaustive*—which in all agricultural countries forebode two things—*impoverishment—depopulation*. The general system of slaveholding farmers and planters, in all times and places, has been, and now is, and ever will be, to cultivate much land, badly, for present gain—in short, to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. They cannot do otherwise with laborers who work by compulsion, for the benefit only of their masters; and whose sole interest in the matter is, to do as little and to consume as much as possible.

This ruinous system of large farms cultivated by slaves, showed its effects in Italy, 1800 years ago, when the Roman empire was at the height of its grandeur.

Pliny, a writer of that age, in his Natural History, (Book 18, ch.

1—7,) tells us, that while the small farms of former times were cultivated by freemen, and even great commanders did not disdain to labor with their own hands, agriculture flourished, and provisions were abundant: but that afterwards, when the lands were engrossed by a few great proprietors, and cultivated by fettered and branded slaves, the country was ruined, and corn had to be imported. The same system was spreading ruin over the provinces, and thus the prosperity of the empire was undermined. Pliny denounces as the worst of all, the system of having large estates in the country cultivated by slaves, or indeed, says he, “*to have any thing done by men who labor without hope of reward.*”

So Livy, the great Roman historian, observed, some years before Pliny, (Book 6, ch. 12,) that “innumerable multitudes of men formerly inhabited those parts of Italy, where, in his time, none but slaves redeemed the country from desertion;”—that is, a dense population of free laborers had been succeeded by a sparse population of slaves.

In further confirmation of our views of the unproductiveness of slave labor, when employed in agriculture, we call your earnest attention, fellow-citizens, to an address delivered to the Agricultural Clubs of Mecklenburg, Va., and Granville, N. C., on the 4th of July last, by James Bruce, Esq.

Mr. Bruce is an intelligent gentleman, and one of the largest slaveholders of Virginia. His opinion of slave labor is therefore entitled to great weight.

We have room for only a few extracts from his Address. After an estimate of the value of slave labor on the exhausted soil of Virginia, compared with its value in cultivating sugar and cotton on the exuberantly fertile bottoms of Louisiana, he says; “This calculation makes the average product of slave labor in Virginia a little over 22 dollars [a year, for each slave.] Thus we see that the profits of slave labor in Louisiana are more than four times greater than in Virginia. The inference seems to be very clear, if there be the remotest approach to accuracy in these calculations, that a large portion of our negroes should be sent to the South West.—I doubt whether every man who owns more than ten working hands, would not be better off by the sale or removal of all beyond that number. But, it may be said, shall we part with so large a portion of our labor, and leave our lands to waste? *Certainly if the labor be unproductive, it is folly to keep it. The slave adds nothing to the moral and physical strength of the country, and if his labor be profitless, of course he is a nuisance, and the sooner we rid ourselves of him the better. His place will soon be supplied with a better population,* and in the meantime the poorer lands will be thrown out of cultivation. The poorer lands in cultivation scarcely produce returns beyond the support of the laborers who cultivate them.—But, gentlemen, (continues Mr. Bruce) there is another view of this question, which should urge us to immediate removal. *All look to the period when the negro must leave Virginia and*

North Carolina. There is now a demand for this population, and the new States of the South are anxious to receive it. *The time is approaching when this demand may cease,* and when their doors may be closed against the admission of our slaves.* Is it prudent to lose the present opportunity? Is it not better to commence the work at once, and to do now what we may be unable to do, when the emergency becomes more pressing?"

"Suppose (says Mr. Bruce again) all this *dead capital*, now invested in slaves, were to become an active monied capital, how many manufactories might be built? How many improvements might be made? Capital would attract labor,† labor for our workshops and our fields. *We should soon have a dense population, which would give schools to our children, a market to our farmers, and those railroads which we now clamor for, but which our poverty and a sparse population places far beyond our reach.*"

Every sentence in these extracts contains an important truth; and especially do the lines that we have marked with *Italic letters* deserve the maturest consideration of every citizen of Virginia.

Agriculture, according to Mr. Bruce, cannot flourish among us, because slave labor is unproductive, and keeps down the population,—also because it prevents the growth of manufactures, and thereby deprives our farmers of a home market, the most valuable of all;—also because it disables the country to construct railroads and canals, to facilitate trade and travel; and finally, we may add, because it destroys the spirit of industry and enterprise in the white population, and thus prevents them from doing what is yet in their power to do for the improvement of the country.

Thus it comes to pass that lower Virginia with stores of fertilizing marl on her extensive shores, still goes on to impoverish probably ten times as much land as she fertilizes;—that the valley, though full of limestone and fertile subsoil, is on the whole becoming more exhausted by a too wide-spread and shallow cultivation;—and that West Virginia in general,—to mention but one of many particulars,—still leaves unoccupied the cheapest and the best sheep-walks in the United States, and confines her husbandry to a few old staple products; while New York and Vermont, in their snowy climate, gain millions of dollars annually by sheep-husbandry.

In 1840, Vermont had 160 sheep to the square mile, and New York, in her Northern districts, nearly as many: whilst Virginia had only 20 to the square mile,—few of them fine-wooled sheep, and these few chiefly on her Northern border, near free Pennsylvania.

No doubt sheep could be kept among our mountains, at one third

*We will add to Mr. Bruce's remark, that the time is not distant, when the Southern demand for slaves *must* cease, and the surplus of this population in old Virginia be diffused over West Virginia—as we may show before we close this address.

†He means free labor; and thus suggests his opinion of the superior productiveness of free labor, for which he would make room by removing the slaves.

of what they cost in those cold Northern countries, where they must be stabled and fed during the five snowy months.

Suppose that the mountains of Virginia were as well stocked with improved breeds of sheep as those North countries; they would now be pastured by six millions of those useful animals; whose yearly product of wool and lambs would be worth seven or eight millions of dollars; and the keeping of them would furnish profitable occupation for 12,000 families of free citizens. Then how changed would be the scene! Our desolate mountains enlivened with flocks; and ten thousand now silent nooks and dells, vocal with the songs of Liberty,—“The Mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty!”—Why is it not so in our mountains?—They who keep slaves cannot keep sheep. The occupation requires care; but what do slaves care? Poor wretches! what should make them care?

A few significant facts will conclude this sketch of our slave-system of agriculture. The towns and cities of lower Virginia are supplied with a great part of their hay, butter, potatoes, and other vegetables, not from the farms of Virginia, but from those of the free States. And even our great pastoral valley imports cheese in large quantities from the North.

Next we shall notice briefly

The Influence of Slavery on Manufactures.

It matters not to our argument, whether a high tariff or a low tariff be thought best for the country. Whatever aid the tariff may give to manufactures, it gives the same in all parts of the United States. Under the protective tariffs formerly enacted, manufactures have grown rapidly in the free States; but no tariff has been able to push a slaveholding State into this important line of industry. Under the present revenue tariff, manufactures still grow in the North; and the old South, as might be expected, exhibits no movement, except the customary one of emigration. We hear indeed, once in a while, a loud report in Southern newspapers, that “The South is waking up,” because some new cotton mill, or other manufacturing establishment,* has been erected in a slave State: a sure sign that in the slave States an event of this sort is extraordinary. In the free States it is so ordinary, as to excite little attention.

Even the common mechanical trades do not flourish in a slave State. Some mechanical operations must, indeed, be performed in every civilized country; but the general rule in the South is, to import from abroad every fabricated thing that can be carried in ships, such as household furniture, boats, boards, laths, carts, ploughs, axes and axehelves, besides innumerable other things, which free communities are accustomed to make for themselves. What is most wonderful, is, that the forests and iron-mines of the South supply, in great part, the materials out of which these things are made. The Northern freemen come with their ships, carry home the timber and pig-iron, work them up, supply their own wants with a part, and then sell the rest at a good profit in the Southern markets.—

Now, although mechanics, by setting up their shops in the South, could save all these freights and profits; yet so it is, that Northern mechanics will not settle in the South, and the Southern mechanics are undersold by their Northern competitors.

Now connect with these wonderful facts another fact, and the mystery is solved. The number of mechanics in different parts of the South, is in the inverse ratio of the number of slaves: or in other words, where the slaves form the largest proportion of the inhabitants, there the mechanics and manufacturers form the least. In those parts only where the slaves are comparatively few, are many mechanics and artificers to be found; but even in these parts they do not flourish, as the same useful class of men flourish in the free States. Even in our Valley of Virginia, remote from the sea, many of our mechanics can hardly stand against Northern competition. This can be attributed only to slavery, which paralyzes our energies, disperses our population, and keeps us few and poor, in spite of the bountiful gifts of nature, with which a benign Providence has endowed our country.

Of all the States in this Union, not one has on the whole such various and abundant resources for manufacturing, as our own Virginia, both East and West. Only think of her vast forests of timber, her mountains of iron, her regions of stone coal, her valleys of limestone and marble, her fountains of salt, her immense sheep-walks for wool, her vicinity to the cotton fields, her innumerable waterfalls, her bays, harbors and rivers for circulating products on every side;—in short every material and every convenience necessary for manufacturing industry.

Above all, think of Richmond, nature's chosen site for the greatest manufacturing city in America—her beds of coal and iron, just at hand—her incomparable water-power—her tide water navigation, conducting sea vessels from the foot of her falls,—and above them her fine canal to the mountains, through which lie the shortest routes from the Eastern tides to the great rivers of the West and the South West. Think also that this Richmond in old Virginia, “the mother of States,” has enjoyed these unparalleled advantages ever since the United States became a nation;—and then think again, that this same Richmond, the metropolis of all Virginia, has fewer manufactures than a third rate New England town;—fewer—not than the new city of Lowell, which is beyond all comparison,—but fewer than the obscure place called Fall River, among the barren hills of Massachusetts:—and then fellow-citizens, what will you think,—what *must* you think—of the cause of this strange phenomenon? Or, to enlarge the scope of the question: What must you think has caused Virginians in general to neglect their superlative advantages for manufacturing industry?—to disregard the evident suggestions of nature, pointing out to them this fruitful source of population, wealth and comfort?

Say not that this state of things is chargeable to the *apathy* of Virginians. That is nothing to the purpose, for it does not go to the bottom of the subject. What causes the apathy? That is the

question. Some imagine that they give a good reason when (leaving out the apathy) they say, that Virginians are devoted exclusively to agriculture. But why should they be, when their agriculture is failing them, and they are flying by tens of thousands from their worn out fields to distant countries? Necessity, we are told by these reasoners, drive the New Englanders from agriculture in their barren country, to trade and manufactures. So it did : Necessity drives all mankind to labors and shifts for a living. Has necessity, the mother of invention, ever driven Virginians to trade and manufactures? No; but it drives them in multitudes from their native country. They cannot be driven to commerce and manufactures. What is the reason of that? If a genial climate and a once-fertile soil wedded them to agriculture, they should have wedded them also to their native land. Yet when agriculture fails them at home, rather than let mines, and coal beds, and waterfalls, and timber-forests, and the finest tide rivers and harbors in America, allure them to manufactures and commerce, they will take their negroes and emigrate a thousand miles. This remarkable fact, that they will quit their country rather than their ruinous system of agriculture, proves that their institution of slavery disqualifies them to pursue any occupation, except their same ruinous system of agriculture. We admit that some few individuals should be excepted from this conclusion : but these few being excepted, we have given you the conclusion of the whole matter; and as Lorenzo Dow used to say—

You cannot deny it.

But many Virginians, from the rarity of manufactures among them, are apt to conceive so largely of those that they see or hear of in our State, that they can hardly be persuaded of the exceeding deficiency of Virginia in this branch of industry. Therefore, in order to establish the truth of all that we have said on this subject, we shall give you from the census of 1840, a comparative view of the manufactures of some of the Free States, and of Maryland and Virginia. We go no farther South in our comparison, but remark what is well known to be true, that the farther South, and the larger the proportion of slaves, the fewer are the manufactures of the country.

We begin with IRON-MAKING, which, although an agricultural operation according to the political economists, is however commonly classed with manufactures. In the returns of the census for Virginia, there is an evident blunder; one furnace in Brunswick county being reported to have made 5000 tons of cast metal. We have reduced this to 500 tons; which cannot be below the truth. With this exception, the returns for Virginia are probably correct. Those for some of the Northern States are certainly defective—but we take them as they are.

We put together the three New England States of Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut, which are in size and resources for iron-making, equal to about one-third of Virginia. New York is inferior to Virginia in iron mines, and Pennsylvania about equal.

New Jersey and Maryland are not half so richly furnished with ore-beds as our State.

Putting cast iron and bar iron together for brevity's sake, we find by the census that the three New England States made about 33,000 tons a year; New York 82,000 tons; New Jersey 18,000 tons; Maryland 19,000 tons; Pennsylvania 186,000 tons; Virginia 20,000 tons; and young Ohio, with less than half the resources of Virginia, 43,000 tons. The two Carolinas together made 4,000 tons. If we value the cast iron at thirty dollars a ton, and the bar iron at fifty dollars, exclusive of the value of the pig metal used in making it, then Pennsylvania, the only State that has resources for iron-making equal to those of Virginia, made iron to the value of about 7,400,000 dollars a year, and Virginia, to the value of 720,000 dollars,—less than one-tenth.

Next, in order to save room, we put together the values of the manufactures of *Cotton, Wool, Leather*, and articles manufactured out of iron and steel, such as *Cutlery, Hardware, &c.* We also put together the three New England States of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, which are in size equal to about one-fifth of Virginia, and in natural resources for manufactures, to about one-tenth.

The total value of these four manufactures was,—In the three New England States, fifty millions of dollars; in New York, twenty-one millions; In little New Jersey, six millions; In Pennsylvania, sixteen millions; In Maryland, three and a half millions; and in Virginia two and three-fourth millions: So even half-slaveholding Maryland, a comparatively small State, beats Virginia in these manufactures: and as to the wholly free States, why, you see how the comparison stands.

To give a clearer idea of the comparative amount of these manufactures, we divide the total value in the several States by their population; and thus find how much it makes on the average for each individual. In the three New England States, the average is forty-five dollars a head; in New York, nine dollars; in New Jersey, sixteen; in Pennsylvania, nine; in Maryland seven and a half; and in Virginia two and a fourth.

If we had taken into the calculation all the various kinds of manufacture, the result of the comparison would not be materially different. We may say therefore that the old Free States have in general about seven or eight times as large a proportion of manufactures, as our old State of Virginia has, notwithstanding her superior resources for that branch of industry.

The last census gave also the cost of constructing new buildings in each State, exclusive of the value of the materials. The amount of this is a good test of the increase of wealth in a country. To compare different States in this particular, we must divide the total cost of building by the number of inhabitants, and see what the average will be for each inhabitant. We find that it is in Massachusetts, \$3 60 cents; in Connecticut, \$3 50 cents; in New York,

\$3 00; in New Jersey, \$2 70 cents; in Pennsylvania, \$3 10 cents; in Maryland, \$2 30 cents; and in Virginia, \$1 10 cents.

The census enables us also to find what proportion there is between the number of persons employed in agriculture, and the number employed in mechanical trades and manufactures. By calculation we find, that for every 100 persons employed in agriculture, there are employed in manufactures and trades, the following numbers, viz: in Massachusetts, 98; in Connecticut, 49; in New York, 38; in New Jersey, 48; in Pennsylvania, 51; in Maryland, 20; and in Virginia, 17.

All these successive comparisons, that we have made between the principal old free States and Virginia, coincide in their general results; and thus prove each other to be approximately correct,—sufficiently so to answer the purpose of our present argument. The reader must have observed also, how uniformly half-slaveholding Maryland serves as an intermediate stepping-stone, as we descend from the high level of Northern prosperity, to the low ground of Virginia depression.

Surely we need say no more to satisfy every one of you, fellow-citizens, that trades and manufactures do not flourish in Virginia; that they are indeed in a very low state; though nature has done every thing that nature can do, to make them easy and profitable to our people.

Let us now turn to the third great branch of productive industry,

Commerce and Navigation.

The Northern people derive much of their wealth from commerce and shipping. But the slave States are more deficient in these, than they are in manufactures. They only make cotton and tobacco for Northern men and foreigners to buy and ship. We have mentioned, in general terms, the excellent facilities which our State possesses for commercial pursuits. We may say, that her bay and tide-rivers all make one great haven, 500 miles long, situated midway between the Northern and Southern extremes of our Atlantic coast. Norfolk is the natural centre of the foreign and coasting trade of the United States. It ought to have commanded the trade of North Carolina, of all the countries upon the waters of the Chesapeake, and of half the Great West. It ought to have been the second, if not the first, commercial city in the United States.

Norfolk is an ancient borough, and once stood in the first rank of American seaports. But its trade declined, its population was long at a stand, and nothing but the public Navy Yard has kept it up. Meanwhile, Northern towns have grown up to cities, and Northern cities to great and wealthy emporiums; until our Virginia seaport, once their equal, would cut a poor figure among their suburbs. Oh

that Norfolk were as prosperous, as her citizens are kind and hospitable !

This sketch of the natural advantages of Norfolk, compared with its condition, is a good index of the commercial history of Virginia. In fact the commerce of our old slave-eaten Commonwealth, has decayed and dwindled away to a mere pittance in the general mass of American trade.

The value of her exports, which twenty-five or thirty years ago, averaged four or five millions of dollars a year, shrunk by 1842, to 2,820,000 dollars, and by 1845, to 2,100,000 dollars.

Her imports from foreign countries, were, in the year 1765, valued at upwards of 4,000,000 of dollars : in 1791, they had sunk to 2½ millions ; in 1821, they had fallen to a little over one million ; in 1827, they had come down to about half this sum ; and in 1843, to the half of this again, or about one-quarter of a million ; and here they have stood ever since,—at next to nothing.

So our great Virginia, with all her natural facilities for trade, brings to her ports about one five-hundredth part of the goods, wares and merchandize, imported into the United States.

Shall we be told that the cause of this decline of Virginia commerce, is the growth of Northern cities ; which by means of their canals and railroads and vast capital, drawn off the trade from smaller ports to themselves ? And what then ? The cause assigned is itself the effect of a prior cause. We would ask those who take this superficial view of the matter : Why should the great commercial ports be all outside of Virginia, and near or in the free States ? Why should every commercial improvement, every wheel that speeds the movements of trade, serve but to carry away from the slave States, more and more of their wealth, for the benefit of the great Northern cities ? The only cause that can be assigned, is, that where slavery prevails, commerce and navigation cannot flourish, and commercial towns cannot compete with those in the free States. They are merely places of deposit, for such country produce, as cannot be carried directly to the Northern markets. Here Northern and foreign ships come to carry away these products of slave labor—and this constitutes nearly all the trade of Southern ports.

No State has greater conveniencies for ship navigation and ship building, than Virginia. Yet on all her fine tide waters, she has little shipping ; and what she has, is composed almost wholly of small bay craft and a few coasting schooners. The tonnage of Virginia—that is, the number of tons that her vessels will carry—is shamefully small, compared with that of the maritime free States. Maine and Massachusetts, with about an equal population, have about fifteen times as much ; little Rhode Island has considerably more ; New York has at least twelve times as much ; Pennsylvania, with her one sea port, has more than twice as much ; and so has half-slaveholding Maryland.

As to ship building, Virginia, that ought, with her eminent advan-

tages for the business, to build as many ships as any State in the Union, does less at it than the least of those free States. All that she builds in a year on her long forest-girt shores, would carry only eight or nine hundred tons—that is, about as much as one good packet ship of the North. Maine and Massachusetts build thirty-five times as much; little Rhode Island builds twice as much; New York twenty times as much; Pennsylvania twelve times as much; and Maryland seven times as much; and what would astonish us, if we did not know so many like facts, is, that much of the ship timber used in the North, is actually carried in ships from our Southern forests, where it might rot before Southern men would use it for any such purpose. We do not blame our Southern people for abstaining from all employments of this kind. What could they do? Set their negroes to building ships? Who ever imagined such an absurdity? But could they not hire white men to do such things? No: for in the first place, Southern white men have no skill in such matters; and in the second place, Northern workmen cannot be hired in the South, without receiving a heavy premium for working in a slave State.

Here we close our general review of the effects of slavery upon the population and the productive industry of States.

We shall now advert briefly to the effects of slavery upon

Common Schools and Popular Education.

There are two ways of estimating the degree of general education and intelligence among a people: the one is, to judge by the number of children going to school; and the other, to judge by the number of grown people who are unable to read or write. The last census contains returns of all these things.

1. The number of scholars that attended school during some part of the year, was in New England and New York, one to every four and a half white persons; in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, one to every nine; in Maryland, one to every nineteen; in Virginia, one to every twenty-one; and in the Carolinas, one to every twenty-seven.

2. In respect to the number of grown white persons unable to read or write, we have to remark, that the returns of the census for all the States, are somewhat defective; for the Southern States exceedingly so, on account of the great numbers of this class of persons, and their reluctance to confess their ignorance. The school systems in the North have made the number very small, excepting the foreign emigrants, who brought their ignorance with them. In the South, not only is the number known to be very large, but they are chiefly natives. Hence it is only in the South, that the defects

in the returns prevent us from forming an accurate judgment of the amount of popular ignorance, resulting from the want of an efficient school system. In the returns for Virginia, there are eight or ten counties in which few or none of this class were returned; and in many other counties, the numbers returned are evidently far short of the truth. We ought certainly to add one-third to the total return, to bring it near the truth. The number returned for Virginia, is 58,787: the actual number could not have been under 80,000. But to be sure of not exceeding the truth, we put it 70,000. We also put North Carolina at 60,000, and South Carolina at 24,000; which exceed the returns, but certainly fall short of the actual numbers.

By examining the census, we find that the adult part of the population is about one-half of the whole. We compare the numbers of white adults who cannot read, with the total number in each State; and find that in New England, these illiterates are as one, to one hundred and seventy: in New York, as one to fifty-three; in New Jersey, as one to fifty-five; in Pennsylvania, as one to forty-nine; in Maryland, as one to twenty-five; in Virginia, as one to five and a half; in North Carolina, as one to four and a half; and in South Carolina, as one to five and a half.

We give these only as approximations to the truth; but they are sufficiently near to show, beyond any manner of doubt, that slavery exerts a most pernicious influence on the cause of education. This it does by keeping the white population thinly scattered and poor, and making the poorer part of them generally indifferent about the education of their children.

A similar difference between the free States and slave States, appears in the West, when we compare Ohio with Kentucky and Tennessee. Four times as large a proportion of children attend school in Ohio, as in the other two States; while the proportion of illiterates is only one-fourth as great. On the whole, the evidence on this subject is complete and unquestionable. The people in the slave States are not, and cannot be, half as well accommodated with schools, as in the free States; and slavery inflicts on multitudes of them the curse of ignorance and mental degradation through life.

Having thus briefly, yet we believe sufficiently, established the proposition that *slavery is pernicious to the welfare of States*; we shall conclude the argument by establishing the particular proposition, that *slavery is pernicious to the welfare of West Virginia*. This being contained in the general proposition, does not need any separate proof; yet, lest some people should imagine that West Virginia is an exception, and has not suffered from slavery, we shall demonstrate to you the contrary by plain facts—facts derived from actual experience—the very best evidence which the nature of the case admits of. We compare the past progress and present condition of West Virginia, with the past progress and present condition of the countries adjacent to her.

Fellow-citizens, has it occurred to you to notice the fact, that **West Virginia** is almost as large as the State of Ohio? If the counties of **Allegany** and **Washington**, in **Maryland**, were added to her, she would be larger than Ohio.—“Oh, but Ohio is a much better country than **West Virginia**.”—About half the State of Ohio is better, we grant—that is, it is a better farming country;—but the other half is not so good. About one third of Ohio consists of dismal swamps and poor hills. In mineral wealth our country is decidedly superior. Taking every thing except slavery into consideration, we say that **West Virginia** ought now to have had more than two thirds as much population and wealth as Ohio. Our great valley is a comparatively old country, and naturally not much inferior to the best parts of Ohio. But instead of two-thirds, we have not more than one-fourth of her population and wealth. In proportion to our natural resources and actual population, we do not grow even one-third as fast as Ohio, and our lands in proportion to quality, are not on the whole more than half as valuable.

But **West Pennsylvania** furnishes a comparison free from all reasonable objection or doubt; for it is a country in the same range of mountains, and similar in every respect, except that it has a harsher climate. Some say that it is on the whole less fertile. It is not so large by 5,500 square miles; containing 33,000, while **West Virginia** contains 38,500 square miles.

Let us see

1. The comparative growth and population of **West Virginia** and **West Pennsylvania**.

In 1830, **West Virginia** contained 378,000 inhabitants.

In 1840, “ “ “ 432,000 “

The increase was 54,000, or $14\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

In 1830, **West Pennsylvania** contained 593,000 inhabitants.

In 1840, “ “ “ 815,000 “

The increase was 222,000, or $37\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

West Virginia increased in these ten years, about one and a half to the square mile, and ended with a population of eleven and a half souls to the square mile.

West Pennsylvania increased in the same time, about seven to the square mile, and ended with a population of nearly twenty-five to the square mile.

The *Great Valley* of Virginia, between the **Blue Ridge** and **Allegany**, and from **Montgomery** county to the **Potomac** river, has an area of 10,100 square miles. The same Valley with no material change of character, extends from the **Potomac** to the **Susquehanna** river, containing an area of 5,100 square miles, in the counties of

Cumberland, Franklin, Perry, Huntingdon and Bedford, in Pennsylvania, and Washington, in Maryland; which last, though a few slaves remain in it, is a county of free labor. But it might be omitted, with no sensible change in the result of our comparison.

The Virginia section of the Valley contained,

| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| In 1820, a population of | 154,000, |
| In 1830, " " | 174,300, |
| In 1840, " " | 175,500. |

The Northern section of the Valley, on half the space, contained,

| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| In 1820, a population of | 129,600, |
| In 1830, " " | 155,500, |
| In 1840, " " | 179,500. |

The Virginia section increased moderately, the first ten years; but scarcely at all, the second ten. The total increase in twenty years, was less than fourteen per cent.

The Northern section kept on, all the time, increasing at a good rate; and gained in the twenty years, thirty-eight and a half per cent, nearly three times as much as the Virginia section.

Yet the Virginia section was at last only half as thickly peopled as the other, and ought therefore to have grown twice as fast. Instead of that, it came almost to a full stop, the last ten years: in fact the newer mountain counties, where there are almost no slaves, and they only, increased a little: the other and richer counties, where slaves were numerous, and had been gaining on the white population—these counties have increased very little for twenty years; some of them have rather declined. The land has already got slave-sick, and is spewing out its inhabitants.

What a pity that so rich and so lovely a land, should be afflicted with this *yellow fever* and this *black vomit*.

But let us return to the general comparison.

The AGRICULTURE of West Pennsylvania is much better conducted, and much more prosperous, than that of West Virginia. We have calculated its productiveness from the census tables, in the manner before described; and we find that the farming industry of West Pennsylvania yields the annual value of two hundred and twelve dollars to the hand; that of West Virginia, one hundred and fifty-eight dollars to the hand. This result is substantially correct; for the lands of West Pennsylvania are much more highly valued, than those of similar natural qualities in West Virginia. This is true, both in the Great Valley, and West of the Allegany. Mark that fact, fellow-citizens; it is worthy of deep consideration; it is full of meaning. Lands in West Virginia are much cheaper than similar lands in

the free country North of Virginia. Yet rather than buy and cultivate these good cheap Virginia lands, Northern farmers go farther, pay more, and fare worse;—so they do, and so they will. They look upon all Virginia as an *infected country*;—and so it is.

Next, the *Iron-making Business*.

West Virginia had, in 1840, as good natural resources, in every respect, for making iron, as West Pennsylvania. Yet, according to the census of 1840, (when no stone-coal was used in iron furnaces,) West Virginia made only 14,660 tons of cast and of bar iron, a year; when West Pennsylvania, made 116,530 tons. The value of the West Virginia iron was 515,000 dollars, that of West Pennsylvania iron was 4,763,000 dollars. The West Virginia iron masters made seventy per cent on their capital, and 390 dollars worth to the hand—chiefly slaves. The West Pennsylvania iron-masters made 109 per cent on their capital, and 720 dollars worth to the hand:—all free laborers.

There is no sign of material error in the census returns, from which we derive these results; and no error can be supposed, which would materially change them.

The iron business has since increased in West Virginia; it has increased vastly more in West Pennsylvania.

Next, *Manufactures*.

If to the value of the cast and the bar iron of each country, we add the value of the manufactures of iron and steel, of wool, cotton and leather, we get a total of 770,000 dollars in West Virginia, and about six millions of dollars in West Pennsylvania.

The cost of constructing new buildings, amounted, in West Virginia, to about one-fourth of what it did in West Pennsylvania; indicating an increase in wealth and population at the same comparative rate.

Manufactures make towns, and towns make good markets for farmers; the larger the towns the better the markets, and the more valuable the lands near them. The Pennsylvania towns are larger and more numerous than the Virginia towns, both in the Valley and West of it. The boast of our West Virginia is the good city of Wheeling. Would that she were six times as large, that she might equal Pittsburg, and that she grew five times as fast, that she might keep up with her.

We glory in Wheeling, because she only, in Virginia, deserves to be called a manufacturing town. For this her citizens deserve to be crowned—not with laurel—but with the solid gold of prosperity. But how came it, that Wheeling, and next to her, Wellsburg—of

all the towns in Virginia—should become manufacturing towns?—Answer: They breathe the atmosphere of free States, almost touching them on both sides.—But again; seeing that Wheeling, as a seat for manufactures, is equal to Pittsburg, and inferior to no town in America, except Richmond; and that moreover, she has almost no slaves:—why is Wheeling so far behind Pittsburg, and comparatively so slow in her growth?—Answer: She is in a country in which slavery is established by law.

Thus it appears, fellow-citizens, by infallible proofs, that West Virginia, in all her parts and in all her interests, has suffered immensely from the institution of slavery.

The bad policy of the Legislature in former times, in respect to roads and land surveys west of the Allegany, did great injury to the country. But after allowance is made for this, a vast balance of injury is chargeable to slavery, and to nothing else. In the Great Valley, where the other causes had little or no operation, the effects of slavery are most manifest and most pernicious. In those parts West of the Allegany, upon the Ohio and its navigable waters, where want of roads and disputed land titles did least injury—there too the corrosive touch of slavery has also shown its cankerous effects.

Here, fellow-citizens, we conclude the general argument; not because we have exhausted our materials—far from it—but because you will think we have said enough for the present. We shall now, by way of appendix to the argument, lay down three propositions, to show the necessity of immediate action, to deliver our West Virginia from the growing evils of slavery.

1. *Comparatively few slaves in a country, especially one like ours, may do it immense injury.*

This has been already proved; but we wish to impress it on your minds. We shall, therefore, explain by examples, how a few slaves in a country may do its citizens more immediate injury, than a large number.

When a white family own fifty or one hundred slaves, they can, so long as their land produces well, afford to be indolent and expensive in their habits; for though each slave yield only a small profit, yet each member of the family has ten or fifteen of these black work-animals to toil for his support. It is not until the fields grow old, and the crops grow short, and the negroes and the overseer take nearly all, that the day of ruin can be no longer postponed. If the family be not *very* indolent and *very* expensive, this inevitable day may not come before the third generation. But the ruin of small slaveholders, is often accomplished in a single life-time.

When a white family own five or ten slaves, they cannot afford to be indolent and expensive in their habits; for one black drudge can-

not support one white gentleman or lady. Yet, because they are slaveholders, this family will feel some aspirations for a life of easy gentility; and because field work and kitchen work are negroes' work, the young gentlemen will dislike to go with the negroes to dirty field work, and the young ladies will dislike to join the black sluts in any sort of household labor.—Such unthrifty sentiments are the natural consequence of introducing slaves among the families of a country; especially negro-slaves. They infallibly grow and spread, creating among the white families a distaste for all servile labor, and a desire to procure slaves who may take all drudgery off their hands. Thus general industry gives way by degrees to indolent relaxation, false notions of dignity and refinement, and a taste for fashionable luxuries. Then debts slyly accumulate. The result is, that many families are compelled by their embarrassments to sell off and leave the country. Many who are unable to buy slaves, leave it also, because they feel degraded, and cannot prosper where slavery exists. Citizens of the Valley! Is it not so? Is not this the chief reason why your beautiful country does not prosper like the Northern Valleys.

2. *Slavery naturally tends to increase from small beginnings, until the slaves out-number the whites, and the country is ruined.*

How this comes to pass, is partly explained in the preceding remarks.

The tendency of a slave population to gain upon the whites, may be counteracted by local causes, permanent or temporary. One permanent cause is the vicinity of a free State; a temporary cause occurred ten or twelve years ago, when the high price of negroes in the South, caused many to be sold out of our Valley. The tendency is stronger also in a planting country, than it is in a farming or grazing country; yet so strong is the tendency itself, that it overcomes this check in West Virginia; for with the temporary exception just alluded to, the slave population has been steadily gaining on the white, in all parts except the vicinity of the free States.

We have examined the census of counties for the last thirty or forty years, in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, with the view to discover the law of population in the Northern slave States. The following are among the general results.

When a county had at first comparatively few slaves, the slave population—except near the free borders—gained upon the whites, and most rapidly in the older parts of the country.

The population, as a whole, increased so long as the slaves were fewer than the whites, but more slowly as the numbers approached to equality. In our Valley, a smaller proportion of slaves had the effect of a larger one in East Virginia, to retard the increase of population.

When the slaves became as numerous as the whites in the Eastern and older parts of the country, population came to a stand; when they outnumbered the whites, it declined. Consequently, the slave

population has tended to diffuse itself equally over the country, rising more rapidly as it was farther below the white population, and going down when it had risen above them.

Such were the general results. Exceptions occurred, but all general rules of this nature have their exceptions. This is nevertheless the law of population in a slave State.

4. *The price of cotton will probably decline more and more, and consequently the value of slaves; then also the law of slave increase, by which it gains on the white population, will operate in West Virginia with ruinous effect, unless prevented by law.*

The price of cotton has regulated the price of negroes in Virginia; and so it must continue to do; because slave labor is unprofitable here, and nothing keeps up the price of slaves but their value as a marketable commodity in the South. Eastern negroes and Western cattle are alike in this, that, if the market abroad go down or be closed,—both sorts of animals, the horned and the woolly-headed, become a worthless drug at home. The fact is, that our Eastern brethren must send off, on any terms, the increase of their slaves, because their impoverished country cannot sustain even its present stock of negroes. We join not the English and American abolition cry about “slave-breeding,” in East Virginia, as if it were a chosen occupation, and therefore a reproachful one. It is no such thing, but a case of dire necessity, and many a heartache does it cost the good people there. But behold in the East the doleful consequences of letting slavery grow up to an oppressive and heart-sickening burden upon a community! Cast it off, West Virginians, whilst yet you have the power; for if you let it descend unbroken to your children, it will have grown to a mountain of misery upon their heads.

We have the following reasons to apprehend, that unless prevented by law, the slave population will in a few years increase rapidly in West Virginia.

1. The price of cotton must fall, and with it the value of slaves.

From 15 to 20 years ago, the average price of cotton was 11 cents a pound; in the last five years between 7 and 8 cents. Had the last crop been a full one, the average would have been under 7 cents. Every successive full crop now depresses the price lower and lower; showing that the supply is on the whole outrunning the demand. It must outrun the demand, while the Southern slave-market is open to Northern slaveholders.

From 1820 to 1830, the slaves in the cotton-growing States (South of Tennessee and North Carolina) increased 51 per cent, and in the next 10 years they increased 54 per cent. In 1840 the number including those in Texas was about 1,300,000. The number increases as fast as ever; for to the natural increase of the Southern stock, is added the increase of the Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina negroes, and half the increase of those in Kentucky and Tennessee. Thus the negro population of the cotton States, is going on to double itself in a period of 16 or 18 years.

Now the production of cotton must increase at the same rate as

the slave population; for cotton and sugar are the only crops in which the slaves can be profitably employed; and the production of sugar cannot increase faster than that of cotton. There will be no stoppage for want of good land: Texas has enough to produce ten times the quantity of the present annual crop.

But the consumption of cotton cannot increase at the same rate. The population of the countries that consume our cotton, does not double itself in less than 60 years: how then can they double their consumption in 18 years, or even twice that period? Therefore the price of cotton must fall, and the Southern demand for Virginia negroes must cease.

2. Good policy will require the Southern States, ere long, to close their markets against Northern negroes. The natural increase of their present stock of slaves, will increase the production of cotton as fast as the market will bear. Their short crops have always brought them more money than their full crops; showing that it is their interest to restrict the quantity within certain limits. A small excess in the quantity causes a ruinous fall in the price. Suppose the average profit to the planters to be now two cents to the pound; then a fall of one cent takes away half the profit and half the value of their slave labor; and a fall of two cents would ruin the business. Good reason, therefore, had Mr. Bruce to apprehend that the Southern slave market might, ere long, be closed; and to urge Virginians to hasten the removal of their negroes to the South.

But whether it be closed or not, one thing is evident,—that the value of slaves in the market must decline more and more. What then?

3. When the Southern slave market is closed, or when, by the reduced profits of slave labor in the South, it becomes glutted;—then the stream of Virginia negroes, heretofore pouring down upon the South, will be thrown back upon the State, and like a river damned up, must spread itself over the whole territory of the commonwealth. The head spring in East Virginia cannot contain itself; it must find vent: it will shed its black streams through every gap of the Blue Ridge and pour over the Allegany, till it is checked by abolitionism on the borders. But even abolitionism cannot finally stop it. Abolitionism itself will tolerate slavery, when slaveholders grow sick and tired of it.

In plain terms, fellow-citizens, Eastern slaveholders will come with their multitudes of slaves to settle upon the fresh lands of West Virginia. Eastern slaves will be sent by thousands for a market in West Virginia. Every valley will echo with the cry "Negroes! Negroes for sale! Dog cheap! Dog cheap!" And because they are dog cheap, many of our people will buy them. We have shown how slavery has prepared the people for this: how a little slavery makes way for more, and how the law of slave-increase operates to fill up every part of the country to the same level with slaves.

And then, fellow-citizens, when you have suffered your country to be filled with negro-slaves instead of white freemen; when its

population shall be as motley as Joseph's coat of many colors,—as ring-streaked and speckled as father Jacob's flock was in Padan Aram;—what will the white basis of representation avail you, if you obtain it? Whether you obtain it or not, East Virginia will have triumphed; or rather *slavery* will have triumphed, and all Virginia will have become a land of darkness and of the shadow of death.

Then by a forbearance which has no merit, and a supineness which has no excuse, you will have given to your children for their inheritance, this lovely land blackened with a negro population—the offscourings of Eastern Virginia,—the sag-end of slavery—the loathesome dregs of that cup of abomination, which has already sickened to death the Eastern half of our commonwealth.

Delay not then, we beseech you, to raise a barrier against this Stygian inundation,—to stand at the Blue Ridge, and with sovereign energy say to this Black Sea of misery, “Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther.”

To show that the extinction of slavery among us is practicable without injustice or injury to any man, we present you the following

Outlines of a Scheme for the Removal of Slavery.

1. *Let the farther importation of slaves into West Virginia be prohibited by law.*

The expediency of this measure is obvious.

2. *Let the exportation of slaves be freely permitted, as heretofore; but with this restriction, that children of slaves, born after a certain day, shall not be exported at all after they are five years old, nor those under that age, unless the slaves of the same negro family be exported with them.*

When the emancipation of the after-born children of slaves shall be decreed, many slaves will be exported, from various motives. The restriction is intended to prevent slaveholders from defeating the benevolent intentions of the law, by selling into slavery those entitled to freedom, and old enough to appreciate the privilege designed for them. Young children are allowed to be taken away with their parents and older brothers and sisters, but not to be sold off separately to evade the law.

3. *Let the existing generation of slaves remain in their present condition, but let their offspring, born after a certain day, be emancipated at an age not exceeding 25 years.*

By this measure slavery will be slowly but surely abolished, without detriment or inconvenience to slaveholders. No pecuniary loss can be sustained, except at the option of the slaveholders, who, if they think that the measure will diminish the value of their slaves in West Virginia, can sell them for exportation or take them away,

with the certainty of making more out of them in that way; than they could by keeping them and their children as slaves in West Virginia. If they choose to stay and submit to the operation of the emancipation law, they have the certainty of gaining more by the rise in the value of their lands, than they will lose in the market value of their slaves, in consequence of the emancipation law.

Undoubtedly such a law would immediately attract emigrants by thousands from the North,—farmers, manufacturers and laborers; who would bring their capital, their skill, and their industry, to enrich the country,—to improve its agriculture, draw out the wealth of its mines, and make its idle waterfalls and coal beds work up its abundant materials of manufacture. Before the law would emancipate a single negro, it would already have added more to the value of the lands and town property of West Virginia than all her slaves are worth. If any man among us have many slaves and little or no land, he can easily profit by the law as well as others; let him sell negroes and buy land.

Will any man argue, that the rights of slaveholders will be violated, because those rights extend to the offspring of their slaves?

Now the slaveholder's right of property extends to the offspring of his slaves, so far as this, that when the offspring comes into existence, the law at present allows him to claim it as his. But when the law of the land shall in this particular be changed, his right is at an end; for it is founded solely on human law. By nature all men are free and equal; and human laws can suspend this law of nature, only so long as the public welfare requires it; that is, so long as more evil than good would result from emancipation. When the law of slavery is changed for the public good, all that the slaveholder can claim, is that in some way, he shall be compensated for the property acquired by sanction of law, and taken away by a change of the law. By our scheme nothing is absolutely taken from the slaveholder. It gives him an option, to remove without loss a nuisance which he holds in the country, or to submit, with a very small loss of value, to another mode of abating that nuisance. We say that the people have a right to remove this pest; and that our scheme gives slaveholders double compensation for what they will suffer by the measure. We have no doubt that before ten years, nearly every slaveholder would acknowledge himself doubly compensated.

4. *Let masters be required to have the heirs of emancipation taught reading, writing and arithmetic: and let churches and benevolent people attend to their religious instruction.*—Thus an improved class of free negroes would be raised up. No objection could be made to their literary education, after emancipation was decreed.

5. *Let the emancipated be colonized.*—This would be best for all parties. Supposing that by exportation, our slave population should in twenty-two years be reduced to 40,000. Then about 1000 would go out free the first year, and a gradually smaller number each successive year. The 1000 could furnish their own outfit, by laboring


a year or two as hirelings; and their transportation to Liberia would cost the people of West Virginia 25,000 dollars: which, as population would by that time have probably reached a million, would be an average contribution of two and a half cents a head. This would be less and less every year.—So easy would it be to remove the *bugaboo* of a free-negro population, so often held up to deter us from emancipation. Easy would it be, though our calculations were not fully realized.

Finally, in order to hasten the extinction of slavery, where the people desired it, in counties containing few slaves: *the law might authorize the people of any county, by some very large majority, or by consent of a majority of the slaveholders to decree the removal or emancipation of all the slaves of the county, within a certain term of years, seven, ten or fifteen, according to the number of slaves.*

This as an auxiliary measure, would be safe and salutary; because the only question then in a county, would be the question of *time*, which would not be very exciting. But it would be inexpedient as the chief or only measure; for then the people of the same county, or of neighboring counties, might be kept embroiled on the subject for years, and the influence of East Virginia, operating on counties here and there, might defeat the whole measure, by a repeal of the law. Let us move as a body first, and determine the main point. Then the counties might decide the minor point for themselves. Let West Virginia determine to be free on a general principle. Then let the counties, if they will, modify this principle, for more speedy relief.

Now, fellow-citizens, it is for you to determine whether the slavery question shall be considered, discussed and decided, at this critical, this turning point of your country's history: or whether it shall lie dormant until the doom of West Virginia is sealed. May heaven direct your minds to the course dictated by patriotism, by humanity and by your own true interest.

A SLAVEHOLDER OF WEST VIRGINIA.

 Gentlemen friendly to the cause, are requested to aid in the sale and circulation of this Address. The expense of printing this large edition is considerable, and much of it must, at all events, fall on a few individuals.

ERRORS OF THE PRESS.

Page 16, line 1 (in some copies) for "protective" read "productive."

" 25 " 6 for "drive" read "drove."

" " " 21 for "their" read "this."

" 28 " 22 for "drawn" read "draw."

